

A TALE of RED ROSES

By
GEORGE RANDOLPH CHESTER

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A step came down the narrow passageway. A rambled fellow appeared in the doorway. He was tall and big and wore good clothes. His hands were coarse and had bluish finger tips, with extremely broad, stubby nails, but they showed no signs of recent toil. He had a wide mouth and prominent cheek bones and a low forehead. He looked like a retired coal heaver. The exigencies of politics had since made him county treasurer, and since then he had lived in prosperous idleness.

Sledge arose and walked around to the front of the table. "I've been paying you seventy-five a month for two years. That right?"

"Yes," hesitated Feeder, with a puzzled glance at the unusual crowd in the little room.

"What for?" demanded Sledge.

Mr. Feeder smiled ingratiatingly, but failed in the process.

"Campaign work," he replied.

"What for?" demanded Sledge.

"Well, I—And, more puzzled than ever, he looked around the equally puzzled gathering. Even Bendix was at a loss.

"What for, I say?" suddenly thundered Sledge.

"On the level?" inquired Feeder. "I don't get this, Sledge. I don't see—"

"Tell 'em!"

"Well, if you got to have it—"

He stopped, gave another glance at his audience and stared at Sledge incredulously.

Sledge advanced a step toward him.

"I said tell 'em."

"Here goes, then," responded Feeder, exasperated—"for keeping my mouth shut about receiving the public funds interest money for you."

"You're a liar!" boomed Sledge and, suddenly stepping forward with marvelous agility for so ponderous a man, swung his right arm, the biceps of which was like a thigh, and knocked Feeder straight through the door.

"Throw him out," he directed and sat down.

Bendix accepted that commission as readily as if it had been a suggestion to ring for another drink. A rather heavy man himself, he stepped lightly into the passageway, grabbed Feeder by the collar as he was rising and punched him in the ear. Phil and Blondy, both gentlemanly bartenders, selected for the hardness and limberness of their shoulders, came running back as promptly as fire horses at the sound of the gong.

"Rough toss," explained Bendix briefly, handing his collar back to Phil.

There was a rattle of chairs and tables and the crash of two or three glasses interspersed with an occasional smack. There were exclamations from a few hangers on and a few inadvertent oaths from the astonished Feeder, but Phil and Blondy were voiceless.

After battering Feeder at the door until a policeman came up, they turned him over for a wagon call.

"What's the charge?" asked the officer.

"That necktie, I think," returned Phil. "But I'll find out," and he ran

back to Sledge's room. "Feeder's

pinched," he stated. "Want it to stick?"

"Uh-huh!" grunted Sledge.

"Cooper's funny. He wants to know what's the charge."

Sledge took a slow survey of his witnesses, and the faintest possible suspicion of a twinkle came into his small gray eyes.

"Attempted blackmail," he chuckled.

CHAPTER VI.

Frank Marley Discovers a Great Team.

MOLLY stopped singing as her father called her into his den.

She hardly recognized his voice, and his face was so drawn and pale that she was startled.

"What's the matter, father? Are you ill?" she asked, deeply concerned.

to make anything like our previous profits, and earning capacity is what gives stock its value. That is not the big trouble now, however. I have a \$70,000 mortgage on this place, which is all it would bring at a forced sale, although it is worth double the money. It expires on the 1st of the month, and Sledge knows it. It is held at one of his banks, and it will not be extended."

"You'll have to pay it," she surmised.

"What with?" he demanded. "At the present prices, which, by the way, nobody cares to buy, I would take every share of my stock to pay off that mortgage. I would be absolutely penniless."

"How did you come to owe so much?" she puzzled. "I thought we were wealthy."

"That's the way business is carried on," he explained.

"Then anybody can be broke," she decided, with a trace of awe. "Why don't some of your good business men get after Sledge?"

He looked at her pityingly.

"It can't be done," he confessed.

"Molly—"

"I know what you're going to say," she interrupted him. "I won't do it. I'm going to marry Bert if it breaks everybody's."

"That would be a very commendable spirit if you loved him," he quietly remarked. "I don't think you do, however. Nor do I, by any means, believe Bert capable of a love worth the sacrifice of everything. The Marylans Gliders do not constitute a universe in themselves, nor is much happiness to be found in a marriage which is a social triumph. I'm afraid, Molly, that you're stubborn and will not let yourself criticize your own mind."

"Of course I'm stubborn!" she admitted, as if that were a virtue. "The life is set, and it will stay set. Do all you men have to give up because you won't marry somebody? Is that the way your brilliant business is conducted? I won't be a part of a bargain. You urge me not to marry Bert because you decide I don't love him, and you urge me to marry a man who can bring your stock to par. Father, you're scared. Can't you think of any way out of your fluctuation but having him to it?"

"He loves you," he told her with conviction. "Sledge never gives up."

"That's why he wins," she asserted.

"He tries everything. Why don't you? Why don't you announce that the new company is illegal and that it will be fought in the courts? Have the newspaper say it can't build its lines; then the price of your stock will go up again. Why don't you make some of your stock for stock in the new company? Why don't you threaten to stop all your cars until the mayor or somebody makes the new company build its lines away from your street? The new company couldn't have cars running for six months, and there'd be a riot unless the authorities did what you wanted them to do. Why don't you go down and shoot Sledge or let him do it? He would! In fact, he'd have done it by this time, I know. Why don't you go to the men who are getting up this company and see what you can find out? Then you can begin some planning. I wish I were a man!"

Frank Marley sat staring at her. She was standing, tall, straight and with dark cheeks, her eyes shining. He passed his hand over his brow.

"No wonder Sledge wants to marry you!" he involuntarily complimented her. "You'd make a great team!"

She laughed and related.

"I don't intend to be mean, but you drive me to it," she said and kissed him and patted him on the head. "Go down to these people and see what you can find out," she counseled.

"I think I will," he concluded, with a dawning realization of his own folly. "I'll make a great team."

"You're a grumpy one."

Mr. Bozzam, in the privacy of his own apartments, reflectively broke the ashes from his cigar into his empty highball glass.

"Is the big chief punctured, or is he just enjoying himself?" he speculated.

"It's my opinion that he's picked up horseshoe nails with all four wheels," declared fat little Timbers, eying the hated collar which he never put on until just before he went out. "The big chief has wriggled his way through the broken glass for so many years that he has thought himself impune. But his pneumatics are flat this time. They've got him."

"I don't know," considered Bozzam.

"They have to bring him to trial yet, and for a man who controls the sacred judiciary it's a long way between an indictment and a hair cut."

"They'll hang him," avowed Timbers.

"The people of this town have been afraid of him so long that the first time they catch him out, with his big stick every man in the county will be fighting to get on the jury which pronounces him guilty."

Mr. Moodson folded the other thumb on top.

"Possibly you're right," assented Bozzam, noting the capitalist's sign of extreme agitation. "When we first started in on this game I was afraid to think with my head under the covers, for fear he'd find it out and decorate me with a ball and chain, but now that they've got him on the run I think it's the psychological moment to hand him the double cross."

"Encore!" applauded Timbers. "He has it coming to him for reduting us to the pay of day laborers. It gives me the heaves to think of pulling off a quarter of a million burglary and only walking away with fifty thousand of the velvet."

"It wasn't safe to let ourselves wish we ought to have any more," explained Bozzam. "I know how we could slip our friend Sledge the twin X's, but the trouble is nobody owns the majority of the stock in the company which is to be milked."

"Let me do some guessing for you," offered Timbers. "If you sift it down to the bottom I think you'll find our aforesaid Sledge as the principal owner."

(To Be Continued.)

Today is the Chinese New Year's Day.

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Monday	7:30 to 12.	1 to 5:30
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Wednesday	7:30 to 12.	1 to 5:30
Thursday	7:30 to 12.	1 to 5:30
Friday	7:30 to 12.	1 to 4:30
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STEPNEY

Mrs. Lucretia Lane has been clerking at B. Hawley & Co.'s store during the illness of Miss Ella K. Beyer.

Mrs. Ernest Sherman has been ill with grip during the last week.

The installation of officers was held at Harmony grange, Thursday evening. Mr. and Mrs. Frank Blakeman, of Stratford, acted as installing officers for the following: Master Charles Joyce, over-seer, Minnie Lecky, lecturer, Edith N. Curtiss, steward, Stanley B. Joyce, assistant steward, Herbert Garlick, chaplain, Edward Curtis, secretary, Edwin C. Shelton, gatekeeper, Merwin Burr, Cook, Elizabeth Beardsley, Pomona, Evelyn Jacot, Flora, Adeline Clark, lady assistant steward, Carolyn Garlick, pianist, Sara Sinclair. At the close of the installation, the lecturer presented an excellent program. A bounteous collation was served during the evening.

Miss Rose Sinclair, teacher of the Stepney school, is boarding with Mrs. Herbert Joyce.

The death of Julius Litman occurred at the Sand Bank house last week. Young Litman came to visit relatives during December, as he was walking from the station he was caught in the blizzard and forced to stay all night at the home of Edward Corning. Illness was brought on by his exposure and later pneumonia set in, causing his death. An excellent program was taken charge of by the Newtown undertaker and shipped to New York for interment.

Mrs. A. J. Hull and Mrs. Charles F. Nichols were guests last week of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Edwards in Bridgeport.

Mrs. William Nichols spent a few days as the guest of Danbury friends last week.

The Elm street school was closed last week on account of the illness of the teacher, Miss Evelyn Jacot.

Harold Tomlinson of Woodbridge, has purchased a farm of Fredrick Loveloy of Norwalk.

Six men who are employed for the Southern New England Telephone Co. are boarding at the home of L. V. Slade.

A daughter of Genevieve Wyckoff was unable to attend to her school duties Friday and the Birdsey's Plain school was closed.

Mrs. Elizabeth Shelton and Frank H. Owen, both of Nichols, were married at the Congregational parsonage by the Rev. Edwin Judson Klock, Monday evening, Jan. 21.

A short wedding trip they will reside at the bride's home in Nichols.

The Ladies' Aid society held a meeting at the home of the president, Mrs. Samuel Ward, Tuesday afternoon. Plans will be discussed for a social to be held Washington's Birthday.

The third of the series of lectures given in the Methodist church during the winter will be held on the evening of Feb. 11, when Dr. James S. Kirtley of Chicago will lecture on the "Barefoot Kingdom."

A daughter was born on Thursday to Mr. and Mrs. S. William Randall at their home in the Center, Wednesday evening.

Constable Berger has a call early Sunday morning to the home of Dr. White in White Plains, who on arriving found that about \$20 worth of food had been stolen from his refrigerator, which is situated in a screened porch at the rear of the home. A search warrant was issued by Justice Tucker and several places were examined but with no results. The physician was naturally much disturbed as he expected to entertain a party of friends at dinner and in order to protect his property which has several times been molested, has caused signs to be erected to the effect that any suspicious characters trespassing on any pretext whatever will be prosecuted.

Henry Blair of Bridgeport was a guest yesterday at a party of friends at the home of Mrs. E. Burton entertained friends at their home Saturday evening.

Mrs. and Mrs. Frank E. Wells left today for a few weeks in the South.

Mr. and Mrs. John E. Burton entertained friends at their home Saturday evening.

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BOARD OF RELIEF

Notice is hereby given that the Board of Relief of the City of Bridgeport will meet at the Assessors' Office, City Hall, for the purpose of hearing appeals made from the findings of the Board of Assessors. Hearings will be held on the following dates in February: Tuesday, Feb. 2; Wednesday, Feb. 3; Thursday, Feb. 3; Friday, Feb. 4; Monday, Feb. 7; Tuesday, Feb. 8; Wednesday, Feb. 9; from 9 A. M. to 4 P. M. and on the evenings of Wednesday, Feb. 2; Friday, Feb. 4; Wednesday, Feb. 9, from 7 to 9 P. M. Dated at Bridgeport this 20th day of January, 1916.

WILLIAM A. LEWIS, THOMAS F. WHITE, ISAAC MOOREY, JOHN E. RILEY.

STATE OF CONNECTICUT, COURT OF PROBATE, DISTRICT OF BRIDGEPORT.

January 25, 1916.

Estate of Wladislaw Szymanski, late of the town of Bridgeport in said District, deceased.

The Court of Probate for the District of Bridgeport, hath limited and allowed six months from the date hereof for creditors of said estate to exhibit their claims for settlement. Those who neglect to present their accounts, properly attested, within said time, will be barred a recovery. All persons indebted to said estate are requested to make immediate payment to

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